

war, it is important that we realize the sacrifices our troops endure. Through voluntary military service, Americans proudly uphold ideals, consistently emerge as leaders and valiantly ensure democracy.

The 109th Field Artillery enjoys a rich heritage. It is one of the oldest units in continuous existence in the United States Armed Forces. It was organized under Col. Zebulon Butler in the Wyoming Valley of northeastern Pennsylvania on October 17, 1775, nearly a year before the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Since the Wyoming Valley was then part of Connecticut, the unit was formed as the 24th Regiment, Connecticut Militia. The Regiment carries both the Connecticut and Pennsylvania state flags in its color guard. It is also officially named "The Wyoming Valley Guards."

The 109th, under various unit designations, fought in the Revolutionary War, mustered into service for the War of 1812, fought in the Mexican-American War, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, World War I in France and in World War II in both France and Germany.

In World War II, the unit distinguished itself during the Battle of the Bulge when the 109th fought valiantly to oppose the German Ardennes Offensive. After its guns were destroyed, the unit fought as infantry often in vicious hand-to-hand combat. For its valor, the battalion was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation, the highest decoration a unit can receive.

On September 5, 1950, the 109th was mobilized for the Korean War. On September 11, 1950, the unit was en route to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, when a passenger train struck the battalion's troop train in Coshocton, Ohio, killing 33 soldiers and wounding scores.

On April 26, 2004, the unit lost its first soldier in combat since 1945 when Sgt. Sherwood Baker was killed after a building he was inspecting in Baghdad, Iraq, exploded.

The Headquarters Battery consists of: Christopher A. Barnes, James J. Belusko, Clinton R. Bollinger, John D. Borger, Raymond T. Bozek, Benjamin B. Chamberlin, Daryl A. Crawford, Matthew J. Deacon, Joseph A. Didino, Mark A. Gordon, John Gowin, Travis L. Haldeman, Kevin M. Hayes, Shaun A. Hinehline, John L. Hosey, Louis F. Johnson, Dean C. Jones, Terry D. Ketchem, William H. Maclunny, Jeffrey E. Marriott, Jeffrey Martin, Joseph J. May, Joseph A. McHugh, Jonathan Mitchell, Brian J. Moore, Troy D. Mueller, Armando Pascale, Casey J. Poeth, Robert R. Rae, Roger E. Reed, Evan L. Reibsome, Michael R. Shoffler, John Shulskie, Michael K. Skoniecki, Damien J. Smith, Stephen S. Stankavage, William P. Verbyla, Brian J. Vest, James E. Waldrop, Patrick L. Walsh, Ralph M. Watkins, Valroy Williams, Michael Wisniewski, and Michael Yavorski.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in thanking these soldiers for their courage and love of country. It is truly an honor to serve them in the United States Congress. Please join me in welcoming these fine Americans home.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRESERVING PATIENT ACCESS TO INPATIENT REHABILITATION HOSPITALS ACT OF 2005

HON. FRANK A. LoBIONDO

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 21, 2005

Mr. LoBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the "Preserving Patient Access to Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospitals Act of 2005." This important piece of legislation will ensure that patients across America will continue to have access to the rehabilitative care they need, and that experts in this community are organized to advise and make recommendations to Congress and the appropriate federal agencies based on the realities and challenges facing the rehabilitative field today and in the future.

Rehabilitation hospitals provide essential care to patients recovering from conditions such as stroke, hip replacement, and cardiopulmonary disease. They treat patients young and old, temporarily and permanently disabled. They allow their patients not only the chance to recover quicker, but to resume active and high quality lifestyles.

Unfortunately, with each passing month fewer and fewer Americans will have access to the unique care and services that rehab hospitals provide. A Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' (CMS) policy, commonly known as the "75% Rule", is being enforced in such a way that many patients, often regardless of their unique and pressing needs, are being turned away from facilities that could otherwise provide them with the best available care.

The "75% Rule" requires a rehab facility to ensure that a percentage of its patients are receiving treatment for one or more conditions as specified by Medicare. When the current rule went into effect in July of 2004, 50% of a rehab facility's admissions were required to fall within the list of conditions, on July 1st this percentage rose to 60%, and will continue to rise until it returns to 75% in 2007. According to a Government Accountability Office report, many rehab facilities will not be able to meet this 75% threshold required at full implementation of the rule.

In an effort to comply with the 75% Rule over the past year, thousands of patients across the country have been turned away from the care they desperately need. Rehab hospitals have been forced to tell patients recovering from cancer and strokes to look elsewhere for care, and have been forced instead to leave beds empty and reduce their staffs so that they can continue to provide care to the patients they are still able to treat. And with each coming year the situation will only get more dire.

The "Preserving Patient Access to Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospitals Act of 2005" will help ease this problem by allowing hospitals additional time to figure out how to ensure they are in compliance with CMS's rules, while still providing the unique care and services they are able to provide to the patients most in need. It will also create a National Advisory Council on Medical Rehabilitation to ensure that future policies created by Federal agen-

cies and Congress reflect the realities and challenges facing the field of rehabilitative care without denying needed care to patients.

The American Hospital Association, American Medical Rehabilitation Providers Association, Federation of American Hospitals and numerous other associations and advocacy groups join me in supporting the "Preserving Patient Access to Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospitals Act of 2005." Their members are seeing first hand the devastating effect the "75% Rule" is having on those in need of rehab care today and the enormous impact further implementation of this Rule will have.

Each and every day, patients across America are being denied the rehab care they need and deserve and which could be available to them. I urge you to speak for them and to support the "Preserving Patient Access to Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospitals Act of 2005."

RECALLING THE INFAMOUS ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION OF CYPRUS

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 21, 2005

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recall the tragic anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus.

On July 20, 1974, the nation of Cyprus was viciously attacked by Turkey. This abominable act of violence against the people of Cyprus has never been undone. To this day, Turkish troops illegally occupy Cyprus, splitting the nation into two areas.

Since 1974, the nation has been divided, but progress is being made toward the reunification of Cyprus. In late April 2004, the people of Cyprus went to the polls to vote on a plan of reunification. Unfortunately, this reunification proposal was rushed, allegedly to coincide with the ascension of Cyprus into the European Union. Because of many legitimate concerns, including security, and in a demonstration of great courage and independence, approximately 75 percent of Greek Cypriots opposed the plan. However, this rushed and unfortunate effort must not, and will not, be the end of attempts to reunify the island. A lasting and equitable solution for the people of Cyprus, and the goal of a united Cyprus, is too important to abandon, now or ever.

The goal of the process must be to attain a just and lasting solution, not a rushed or imposed solution. Currently, the Republic of Cyprus is seeking a plan that truly reunifies both its society and economy, while allowing each community to retain its own identity and culture, without foreign occupation.

I remain committed to achieving a solution to this problem so that we never have to gather again to commemorate an anniversary of this condemnable and unjustifiable invasion. Mr. Speaker, I pray that this will be the last year of a divided Cyprus. It is my fervent hope that, 31 years after Cyprus was torn asunder, all Cypriots can be reunited, living in peace and freedom forever.